lower vessel 4 up through the funnel 8, through the coffee grounds 32, where it infuses with the coffee, up the spout 18 and out of the apertures 20 formed in the spout 18 of the upper vessel 6. By virtue of the unheated area 158 beneath the funnel 8, water directly below the funnel 8 does not boil during the bulk water heat-up phase. This prevents the coffee grounds 32 being scalded by steam until properly wet. This improves the flavor of the brewed coffee.

Once the majority of the water has been pushed out of the lower vessel 4 through the funnel 8, the temperature of the heater 40 will begin to rise, and this rise will be detected by the actuator 60 of the control 42. In particular, the actuator 60 of the control will operate to open the contact 70, 72 thereby disconnecting the power supply to the heater 40 when the area of the heater 40 under which it is arranged boils dry. The contact 70, 72 are then maintained open by one of the various mechanisms described in Figures 6 to 10 in order to stop the heater 40 re-energizing.

The appliance can then be lifted and the beverage dispensed from the upper vessel 6, whereafter the upper vessel 6 may be unscrewed from the lower vessel 4, the funnel 8 removed and the appliance cleaned. The process will then be repeated to prepare a new beverage, the act of pressing the reset button 86 allowing the contacts 70, 72 to reclose in order to supply power once more to the heater 36.

It will be appreciated that various modifications can be made to the preferred embodiments of the invention described above without departing from the scope of the invention. For example, controls other than those specifically described may be used, so long as they detect overheating of the heated base vessel. Furthermore, other latching mechanisms may be envisaged for holding open the contacts of a control upon operation. Furthermore, the invention is not limited to the use of thick film printed elements, but can be used with electric heating elements suitably mounted under the base of the vessel. Also, the appliance need not be cordless, as shown and the appliance may be adapted to make other beverages such as soup.

Although this invention has been shown and described with respect to the detailed embodiments thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes in form and detail thereof may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. An electric beverage maker comprising a lower, water boiling vessela funnel extending into the lower vessel and having an upper compartment for receiving a beverage and an upper vessel mounted over said funnel to receive water which has passed up said funnel through said compartment, and from which the beverage is dispensed, characterized in that said lower vessel is formed with an opening in its lower region, and in that opening an electric heater is mounted to close said opening thereby forming a heating base for the lower vessel.

2. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 1 wherein the lower vessel is made of plastics.

3. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 2 wherein the lower vessel has side walls which extend down below the opening so as to form a skirt.

4. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 1 wherein the upper vessel is molded plastics.

5. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 1 wherein the heater, which is arranged in the base of the lower vessel, is a planar heater having heating means provided in or on its underside.

6. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 5 wherein the heater is provided with a peripheral flange which is urged upwardly to secure the heater in place.

7. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 6 wherein said flange is urged upwardly by the housing of a control for the beverage maker.

8. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 1 further comprising a thermally sensitive control operable to disconnect the power supply to the heater when at least a part of said lower vessel boils dry.

9. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 8 wherein the control is arranged such that it disconnects the power to the heater until the control is reset by a user.

10. An electric beverage maker as claimed in claim 1, wherein said heater comprises an unheated region arranged directly below said funnel.

11. An electric beverage maker comprising a lower, water boiling, vessel, a funnel extending into the lower vessel and having an upper compartment for receiving a beverage, an upper vessel mounted over said funnel to receive water which has passed up said funnel through said compartment and from which the beverage is dispensed, and electric heating means associated with said lower vessel for heating water in said lower vessel characterized in that said beverage maker further comprises a thermally sensitive control for disconnecting the electrical supply to said heater when the water in said lower vessel substantially boils away, and means for manually resetting said control to allow said heater to be re-energized.

12. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 9 wherein said control comprises a thermally sensitive actuator operable to open a set of contacts when the liquid in at least a part of said lower vessel has been boiled away, and further comprises means for maintaining those contacts open until such time as reset by a user of the appliance.

13. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 12 wherein said actuator is a thermally sensitive bimetallic actuator of the type which has a reset temperature which is significantly below normal ambient temperatures whereby it may only be reset by a user in normal use.

14. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 12 wherein a movable contact is mounted on a bi-stable contact arm which, once it has been moved to its open position, can only be returned to its closed position by a manual reset mechanism.

15. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 12 further comprising a latch for latching a movable contact in an open condition after operation of the bimetallic actuator, and a manual latch release mechanism.

16. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 15 wherein the latch comprises a catch and a resilient latch member which engages the catch to latch the contact open.

17. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 16 wherein said latch release mechanism comprises a release member for deflecting said resilient latch member out of engagement with said catch.

18. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 16 wherein the catch is associated with the movable contact.

19. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 18 wherein said latch release mechanism comprises a release member for deflecting said resilient latch member out of engagement with said catch.

20. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 18 wherein said resilient latch member comprises an elongate leaf or wire spring.

21. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 20 wherein said latch release mechanism comprises a release member for deflecting said resilient latch member out of engagement with said catch.

22. An electric beverage maker as claimed in claim 11, wherein said heater comprises an unheated region arranged directly below said funnel.

23. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 1 comprising a lamp or other indicator which is illuminated either while the liquid is heating, or after the control has operated, thereby indicating that the beverage is ready.

24. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 1 wherein the heating base of the lower vessel is arranged to slope and the actuator of a control is arranged at an upper part of the base.

25. A thermally sensitive control for an electric beverage maker comprising a lower, water boiling, vessel, a funnel extending into the lower vessel and having an upper compartment for receiving a beverage, an upper vessel mounted over said funnel to receive water which has passed up said funnel through said compartment and from which the beverage is dispensed, and electric heating means associated with said lower vessel for heating water in said lower vessel, said control comprising a thermally sensitive actuator operable to open a set of contacts when the liquid in at least a part of said lower vessel has been boiled away, a latch for latching a movable contact in an open condition after operation of the bimetallic actuator, and a manual latch release mechanism.

26. A control as claimed in claim 23 wherein the latch comprises a catch and a resilient latch member which engages the catch to latch the contact open.

27. A control as claimed in claim 26 wherein said latch release mechanism comprises a release member for deflecting said resilient latch member out of engagement with said catch.

28. A control as claimed in claim 26 wherein the catch is associated with the movable contact.

29. A control as claimed in claim 28 wherein said latch release mechanism comprises a release member for deflecting said resilient latch member out of engagement with said catch.

30. A control as claimed in claim 26 wherein said resilient latch member comprises an elongate leaf or wire spring.

31. A control as claimed in claim30 wherein said latch release mechanism comprises a release member for deflecting said resilient latch member out of engagement with said catch.

32. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 11 wherein said control comprises a thermally sensitive actuator operable to open a set of contacts when the liquid in at least a part of said lower vessel has been boiled away, and further comprises means for maintaining those contacts open until such time as reset by a user of the appliance.

33. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 32 wherein said actuator is a thermally sensitive bimetallic actuator of the type which has a reset temperature which is significantly below normal ambient temperatures whereby it may only be reset by a user in normal use.

34. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 32 wherein a movable contact is mounted on a bi-stable contact arm which, once it has been moved to its open position, can only be returned to its closed position by a manual reset mechanism.

35. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 32 further comprising a latch for latching a movable contact in an open condition after operation of the bimetallic actuator, and a manual latch release mechanism.

36. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 35 wherein the latch comprises a catch and a resilient latch member which engages the catch to latch the contact open.

37. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 36 wherein the catch is associated with the movable contact.

38. A beverage maker as claimed in claim 37 wherein said resilient latch member comprises an elongate leaf or wire spring.

39. A control as claimed in claim 25 wherein said latch release mechanism comprises a release member for deflecting said resilient latch member out of engagement with said catch.

40. A control as claimed in claim 26 wherein said latch release mechanism comprises a release member for deflecting said resilient latch member out of engagement with said catch.

41. An electric beverage maker comprising a liquid heating vessel, a funnel extending into the vessel, and an electric heater for heating liquid in the vessel, wherein a portion of the heater directly below the funnel is unheated.